WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for processing redundant electronic mail messages comprising:

   receiving an electronic mail message; and

   deleting the received electronic mail message if the received electronic mail message is substantially similar to an available electronic mail message.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the deleting comprises determining whether the received electronic mail message was substantially unaltered by a sender of the received electronic mail message.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein the deleting comprises:

   flagging the received electronic mail message if the received electronic mail message was substantially unaltered by a sender of the received electronic mail message; and

   deleting the flagged electronic mail message.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the available electronic mail message comprises undeleted electronic mail messages stored in a memory device of the recipient terminal.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein the undeleted electronic mail messages comprise previously opened electronic mail messages and unopened electronic mail messages.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the deleting is automatically performed if the received electronic mail message is substantially similar to the available electronic mail message.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the deleting is perform upon confirmation by a recipient of the received electronic mail message if the received electronic mail message is substantially similar to the available electronic mail message.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the available electronic mail message is

1   substantially similar to the received electronic mail message if the available electronic

2   mail message and the received electronic mail message have a substantially similar

3   identifier field.

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5   9.   The method of claim 8 wherein the identifier field comprises at least one from

6   the group of user information, subject information and timestamp information.

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8   10.   A method for processing redundant electronic mail messages comprising:

9   forwarding an electronic mail message addressed to at least one recipient

10 terminal;

11   determining whether the forwarded electronic mail message is substantially

12 similar to an available electronic mail message; and

13   deleting the forwarded electronic mail message if the forwarded electronic mail

14 message is substantially similar to the available electronic mail message.

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16 11.   The method of claim 10 further comprising:

17   configuring control information for the electronic mail message to be

18 forwarded;

19   sending the control information with the forwarded electronic mail message;

20 and

21   processing the control information, where the determining is performed upon

22 processing the control information.

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24 12.   The method of claim 11 wherein the control information comprises a flag.

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26 13.   The method of claim 11 wherein the control information is embedded in a

27 header of the forward electronic mail message.

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29 14.   The method of claim 10 wherein the available electronic mail message is

30 substantially similar to the forwarded electronic mail message if the available electronic

31 mail message and the forwarded electronic mail message have a substantially similar

32 identifier field.

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15.   The method of claim 14 wherein the identifier field comprises at least one from the group of user information, subject information and timestamp information.

16.   The method of claim 10 wherein the electronic mail message is forwarded to a distribution list addressed to at least one recipient terminal.

17.   The method of claim 16 further comprising:
        configuring an attribute for the distribution list; and
        processing the attribute to determine whether to delete the forwarded electronic mail message.

18.   The method of claim 17 wherein the attribute flags the forwarded electronic mail message as at least one type of electronic mail message from the group of an urgent message, a FYI (for your information) message, a message requesting automatic acknowledgement, and a forward message that is non-redundant to the addressed recipient terminal.

19.   An apparatus for processing redundant electronic mail messages comprising:
        a memory for storing an electronic mail program; and
        a processing unit, coupled to the memory, for executing the electronic mail program retrieved from the memory, receiving an electronic mail message, and deleting the received electronic mail message if the received electronic mail message is substantially similar to an available electronic mail message.

20.   The apparatus of claim 19 further comprising a display unit, coupled to the processing unit, for displaying the available electronic mail message.

21.   A computer readable medium storing a software program that, when executed by a computer, causes the computer to perform a method comprising:
        receiving an electronic mail message; and
        deleting the received electronic mail message if the received electronic mail message is substantially similar to an available electronic mail message.

22.   The computer readable medium of claim 21 wherein the deleting comprises
determining whether the received electronic mail message was substantially unaltered
by a sender of the received electronic mail message.

23.   The computer readable medium of claim 22 wherein the deleting comprises:
        flagging the received electronic mail message if the received electronic mail
message was substantially unaltered by a sender of the received electronic mail
message; and
        deleting the flagged electronic mail message.

24.   The computer readable medium of claim 21 wherein the available electronic
mail message comprises undeleted electronic mail messages stored in a memory device
of the recipient terminal.

25.   The computer readable medium of claim 24 wherein the undeleted electronic
mail messages comprise previously opened electronic mail messages and unopened
electronic mail messages.

26.   The computer readable medium of claim 21 wherein the deleting is
automatically performed if the received electronic mail message is substantially similar
to the available electronic mail message.

27.   The computer readable medium of claim 21 wherein the deleting is perform
upon confirmation by a recipient of the received electronic mail message if the received
electronic mail message is substantially similar to the available electronic mail
message.

28.   The computer readable medium of claim 21 wherein the available electronic
mail message is substantially similar to the received electronic mail message if the
available electronic mail message and the received electronic mail message have a
substantially similar identifier field.

29. The computer readable medium of claim 28 wherein the identifier field comprises at least one from the group of user information, subject information and timestamp information.